

## **COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE**

**January 25, 2005**

**6:00 PM**

Chairman Shea called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Shea, Sysyn, DeVries, Garrity, Forest

Messrs.: V. Lamberton

Chairman Shea addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Ordinance amending Section 33.027 Employee Recruitment and Selection (F) submitted by Aldermen Garrity and Porter.

Alderman Garrity moved the item for discussion and asked for a chance to read the letter from Ms. Lamberton. Again, we have stuff on our desks when we walk in. I don't know how many times we have to say it but it gets frustrating.

Chairman Shea stated we will take a few minutes to read it.

Chairman Shea asked Ms. Lamberton to comment on the proposed ordinance amendment.

Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, stated when I first came here I was really quite shocked that there was on system to sort out people who had the proper background or the required background versus people who didn't have the proper background. I talked to several people about that around the City including some Aldermen and then decided to go forward with proposing that the City of Manchester only consider people who met the minimum qualifications for positions to have their applications sent to departments for consideration of employment. Later on in my letter I tell you some of my concerns and one of the most obvious concerns that I have would be we have all types of laws that protect different types of people in our country and the first thing that came to my mind when I saw that was if you have an individual who is considered a protected class person who is not a white American essentially and they are qualified and they are not given consideration or hired over a person that is not in a protected class who is unqualified. You are just inviting a lawsuit and you probably will get a lawsuit sooner or later and you will lose. You will be paying money out needlessly and

also you are not being fair to the people that are qualified. Nonetheless, the way the system works here and in other public environments is you work with a department, you ask them what the duties of a position are going to be, they describe them to you, you draft something up for them and give it back to them. They look at it and say yes or no that is what the position is going to be required to do. Then my question to people always is if you put in ad in the paper tomorrow to fill this position what kind of a person are you looking for. What kind of education or experience are you going to be looking for in individuals who would apply for this and the department head or the supervisor would tell me that and that is how we develop minimum education and minimal experience criteria. Once we have done that as you know we come to the full Board for approval of job specifications. Then we would advertise in the newspaper and on the web. We advertise in lots and lots of places for positions and in those advertisements it tells individuals what the general duties of the position are and what is required in order to be considered for the position. Those applications come to Personnel either over the Internet or through the mail. They are reviewed. If a person hasn't completed the application, we contact them and ask them to complete it. If they haven't finished a sentence and we feel they are borderline, they get contacted. If they absolutely do not meet the criteria, they are then sent a letter telling them that they are not eligible for consideration for this position but we would be happy to keep their application on file for other positions. The applications of the qualified individuals go to the department head and now they have a pool of candidates that they can screen through and select which one of those individuals they would like to interview for the position. So that is how that works. The second half of my letter is other issues that I really want the Board to think about. The first one was what I stated earlier. What are we going to tell a jury or court when we are sued by a qualified candidate who is in a protected class when we have hired an unqualified person. The other thing is we establish minimum qualifications as part of our point factor system so if you start removing education and start removing experience, you are removing points which means you are removing the salary grade and you are making it lower. If a department tells me that a position needs a certain type of knowledge of experience, that makes the position a higher grade and then they go and hire people that have none of those criteria, then apparently that position is not properly classified and is probably over graded. Again, how do you explain to anybody, our taxpayers included, that the City is interested in hiring unqualified people rather than the best of the best. Just so you know, we have gone through other jobs over the last year or two where there were certain circumstances in Highway, the Airport and a few other places where people had driver's licenses but they didn't have CDL's so we allowed them to get the job and within six or twelve months, I forget which, they have to get their commercial driver's license in order to keep the job. So those essentially were trainee positions for those people. We helped them get their licenses and that was okay. It worked out for the departments. Some departments were not interested in that

because they didn't have enough positions where they could offer that opportunity. All in all I strongly urge the Board to require people that work for the City to be qualified for their positions.

Alderman Garrity stated I have a comment before I make a couple of points. I am offended that the Human Resources Director would put a strongly worded letter on my desk five minutes before this meeting starts. This agenda was out on Friday. There is no excuse for information like this coming to Aldermen on this Committee five minutes before the meeting starts. No excuse whatsoever. I just had to make that comment, Mr. Chairman. I think this issue hasn't been explained or this "qualified" or "unqualified" applicant...the request that Alderman Porter and I made is to have some department heads or if the department head so chooses to look at the applications. It doesn't let the Human Resources Department...they can put comments on the qualifications and things like that. I am not saying we should hire a department head or a Deputy Public Works Director that is not qualified, you know someone who needs a Ph.D. Basically from my experience with laborers and things like that, constituents come to me and ask say gee I put in for a laborers job at such and such department and the application has not been sent to the department head for some reason that I feel is not necessarily. I think it is a duty of an Aldermen to take care of his constituents and say let me see if I can at least get you an interview. When someone calls me, I don't say I can get you a job. It doesn't work like that for me. What I do say is I can see if I can get you an interview. You have to get the job on your own but this qualified and unqualified you know that has been spread through the media and things like that...is Ms. Lamberton qualified to be a Public Works Director or Health Officer or anything like that? I don't believe that. This is not anything about Ms. Lamberton. This is about the process and changing it a bit to have it work a little better and have some flexibility for our high paid department heads to look at different applicants for laborers jobs and things like that.

Alderman Porter stated as a co-sponsor if you will of the request to change, I would simply like to say that having grown up and lived in the City of Manchester with the exception of a few years in the service and out of town for business, I have a good feel for what the people in the City of Manchester and the taxpayers need. Manchester in 1846 was incorporated and all of the sudden two years ago, gee we better wake up otherwise we are hiring unqualified people. At no point is anybody suggesting that we hire unqualified people and I certainly have a concern as a taxpayer myself and I think if people who make these recommendations were taxpayers they might also look at it from a taxpayer point of view. I don't believe that it is fair to have somebody just stonewalled because they don't put a certain thing on a resume. I have enough trust in the department heads that they are in a far better position to make a decision than anyone in the Human Resources Department.

Alderman Garrity moved to approve the ordinance. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion. Chairman Shea called for a vote. The motion failed with Aldermen Shea, DeVries and Forest being duly recorded in opposition.

#### **TABLED ITEMS**

4. Communication from Joan Porter, Tax Collector, relative to part-time employees.  
*(Retabled 01/04/2005 pending a report on the fiscal impact from Human Resources.)*

This item remained on the table.

5. Communication from Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, on behalf of the Planning Director recommending that an Administrative Assistant position, salary grade 13, be reclassified to a Planning Technician, salary grade 14.  
*(Tabled 01/04/2005 pending further information from the Planning Director.)*

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Garrity it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee